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ON HABITS OF SOME AMERICAN SPECIES OF BIRDS.

BY THOS. G. GENTRY.

The body of facts contained herein is the result of observations carried through a period of four consecutive seasons, and is confined to species which, though of extended range, breed within the State of Pennsylvania. This paper is designed to cover the ground from the Family Icteridæ to the end of the Family Picariæ, exclusive of western species and a few whose habits have been described by the writer in the forthcoming work of Dr. Coues.

Family ICTERIDÆ.

Subfamily AGELÆINÆ.

Molothruis pecoris, Swainson.

This well-known species, though an early visitor in Massachusetts, which, according to the authority of Samuels, makes its appearance there as early as the middle of March, from some cause or other has never been observed by the writer earlier than the second week of April, long after the blue-birds, robins, and blackbirds have made the fields and woods resound with their music. Its arrival is announced by the coming of the warblers and sparrows, between whom and it exists such mysterious relations. The anomalous habit which the female possesses of visiting the nests of smaller species of birds when she wishes to deposit her eggs, and thus shifting a responsibility which she should alone assume, is familar to all. There is no doubt that primitively all species were as equally social and gregarious in their habits as the cow-bird of to-day; and that the present system of mating, which is surely an index of a high state of improvement, has been gradually evolved. The art of nest-building has doubtless also been slowly acquired. In some families it has attained a wonderful degree of perfection, while in others it may be said to be in its infancy. With the cow-bird either it has never been studied, so to speak, or else it is a lost art which the species has never been able to regain.

The species of birds which seem to be the objects of its special regard, are comprehended within the three great families of the *Sylvicolidæ*, *Vireonidæ*, and *Fringillidæ; Geothlypis trichas*, Cab.; *Vireo olivaceus*, Vieil.; *V. novaboracensis*, Bonap; *Cyanospiza cyanea*, Baird; and *Melospiza melodia*, Baird. Why the small birds should be the recipients of such unsolicited favors it would be difficult to guess, unless the cowardly spirit of the species under consideration operates to prevent similar discourtesies being shown where they would probably be resented. As a proof of said cowardice, might be cited the stealthy manner in which the female approaches the nest of any of the above species. She is ever on the alert for fear of detection by the rightful owners. In case of discovery she takes to flight, sometimes failing to complete her work; but when suddenly pressed, she is compelled to drop her egg. This will account for the eggs which are occasionally seen either entire or broken upon the ground. It is said that the egg of the cow-bird hatches rather sooner than those of the birds among which it is found, and from this it is argued by some, that it is a wise provision of nature, which, were it otherwise ordered, would defeat the end she had in view. The writer knows from experience that sometimes a nest of eggs is a longer time in hatching than at others; the difference of time being the evident result of variation in the amount of heat to which they are subjected. Now, the egg of the cow-bird being perceptibly larger than the others, would receive more heat from the body of the female than the latter's own, for the simple reason that it is in closer proximity to the source of heat. This seems to be a satisfactory explanation of its much shorter period of incubation. Were the eggs hatched by their rightful author, there is no doubt that the time would vary but a trifle, if any, from that of the rusty black-bird.

Agelaieus phœniceus, Vieil.

At the time of writing, March 24th, not a single individual of this species is to be seen, while the purple grakle is found in prodigious numbers. About the first of April is the usual time of its appearance with us. Like the crow-black-bird, it is fond of society, many pairs being observed building within a few paces of each other in the same swamp or meadow. Occasionally a nest is constructed within a tussock of grass, but generally upon the alder bushes so common along the borders of meadow streams, where the eggs and young are less liable to the attacks of snakes, particularly *Bascanion constrictor* and *Tropidonotus sipedon* which seem to have such a decided penchant for such fare.

In structure those found upon bushes are finer and more compact. On the exterior are observed occasional patches of mud. While those built upon the small mounds in swampy situations are surrounded by tall overarching grasses, and have in consequence a looseness of arrangement which in general will scarcely bear manipulation.

In the selection of a locality there is manifest an evidence of design. High grounds are seldom chosen for nidification, for the obvious reason that the birds are not so apt to meet with such a ready and full supply of the various species of insects which pander to their appetites and those of their young as in the former situations. The insects which afford them a living in such localities, are the aquatic larvæ of ephemerids, dragonflies, and mosquitoes which are found in the small shallow pools so abundant therein; together with mature forms of the same—a variety which the most fastidious *bon vivant* among the *aves* cannot fail to appreciate.

It has been affirmed that the red wings are destructive to farmers' crops, but as far as the writer's experience extends, the damage which they do is small in comparison with the good which they accomplish. When a cornfield is in close proximity to a meadow, it is probable that a few grains may be exhumed, or a few tender shoots uprooted, in early spring, but I am certain that the birds during the breeding season are so strongly attached to the meadows that they are reluctant to leave them. In the fall of the year they may visit the cornfields and pluck a few grains from the standing shocks, but in view of the manifold advantages gained by the myriads of insects destroyed, we should not grudge them a mere pittance of corn, since, at this season of the year, they are doubtless productive of immense good in the destruction of various coleopterous and lepidopterous larvæ.

Sturnella magna, Swainson.

This beautiful species, though quite common in this latitude during the breeding season, according to the writer's observations makes its appearance from the first to the fifteenth of April. It is not gregarious in early spring like the purple grakle, but arrives from the south already paired for the essential duties of nidification and incubation. It does not commence building operations, however, earlier than the last of April or the beginning of May; the interval of time being employed, judging from the manœuvres of the birds, in the selection of a desirable and suitable locality. The site chosen is, as is well known, a meadow. Samuels affirms, "the locality is generally in a meadow or low field." I have as often found the nest on upland in a field of red clover or one of timothy grass. In such situations it reposes in a concavity of the earth, partially hidden and protected by enveloping and over-arching grasses. Nuttall's description thereof, though correct in his day, according to the writer's experience needs some modification. As the nest of the same species varies with a change of locality, this difference may be attributed thereto. According to that eminent authority "it is compact, made of wiry grass, to which a hidden and almost winding path is made, and generally so well concealed that the nest is only to be found when the bird is flushed." I have always observed a looseness of arrangement in its structure. The materials out of which it is built are the hollow stems and leaves of *Phleum pratense*. These are accumulated principally in the bottom, to insure protection against the dampness of the ground.

It is seldom that the hen bird can be detected on the nest. When alarmed by approaching footsteps, there is no sudden uprising or whirring of wings as is usual. Aware of danger, she quietly slips out of the nest and noiselessly wends her way through the thicket of grasses, along well-beaten paths which she has made for the purpose.

The food of the meadow lark consists chiefly of larval insects, together with earthworms, beetles, grasshoppers, and the seeds of grasses. Nuttall says it does not appear that it ever adds berries or fruits to its bill of fare. The writer is confident he has seen it feasting upon the small black cherry which is so plentiful during the month of June. The period of incubation is from 14 to 15 days according to various observations.

Subfamily ICTERINÆ.

Icterus spurius, Bonap.

The orchard oriole is quite as common as its near relative. It reaches us from the genial South about the first of May. Samuels, in describing its nest in Massachusetts, says substantially, it is deposited on a forked branch of a tree in an orchard, at an elevation of not more than twenty feet from the ground, and constructed of different grasses neatly and compactly woven together; the whole being lined with fine grasses and a few hairs. Further, he says, "it is not pensile but built *on* a branch." Its style of architecture varies no doubt with the latitude. Of the many nests which have been examined, including many in the writer's collection, all with but one or two exceptions were of a decidedly pensile character; uniform in texture, and suspended from slender branchlets after the fashion of *Icterus Baltimore*, Daudin. The exceptional cases were placed between the forked branches of trees. These nests, with two exceptions, have been found upon apple and pear trees, in close proximity to the residence of man; the exceptions were noticed on the confines of forests, at considerable distances therefrom. There is no doubt that in earlier times this oriole was as timid and suspicious of man as many other species that might be cited; and that as time advanced it gradually lost all fear. Familiarity with man, the result no doubt of many years' experience, has taught it to regard him in the light of a friend. In the fact that the nest of this species is occasionally found on the borders of immense thickets, we have a clue to its past history. In the writer's opinion, reserve, timidity, and distrust were then the leading elements of its character, while familiarity, a certain degree of boldness and confidence are traits which now stand prominently forth.

A typical nest of the species measures 2½ inches in diameter and 4½ inches in depth. It is pouch-shaped, and attached to the slender twigs of an apple or pear tree in such a manner as to be swayed to and fro by the gentlest breeze. It is built of the soft and flexible leaves of a species of *Poa*, neatly and compactly woven together, and lined on the inner side with much narrower leaves of a closely allied species. The site selected is usually one where the small spurs of the pear and apple, principally the former, with their crowns of leaves can meet over the nest and form a roof to protect the female and young from inclement weather.

During the breeding season its chief food is beetles, flies, lepidoptera, earthworms, and various larvæ. The seeds of grasses are occasionally relished. It is highly insectivorous in its nature. I am not able to say whether it has a fondness for fruits and berries, but am inclined to the belief that it will not refuse a juicy berry if thrown within its way; but that it will not put itself to any inconvenience to obtain the same I am well aware.

In the duties of incubation the male takes no direct part. I have often observed him bringing food to the female while thus engaged. When the young have developed from the egg, both parents are extremely sedulous in their attention to them until they have attained their feathered stage, when the mother seems to hand them over to the father to initiate into the mysteries of aerial navigation. There is but one brood in the season, as far as I have been able to determine, although I have seen nests in the early part of August with rather tender fledglings. The period of incubation ranges from fourteen to fifteen days.

Family CORVIDÆ.

Corvus Americanus, Audubon.

The above species is very abundant throughout the summer in this section of the country, and the writer has observed through the severest winter weather numberless individuals roosting in the junipers and cedars of the hills of the Wissahickon, when the snow stood several inches upon the ground. The birds commence pairing about the last of April, seldom earlier than the fifteenth, and shortly afterwards commence building. The nests are usually built upon the various species of oaks, and occasionally upon some of Pinus. They are large in dimensions, fully 18 inches in diameter at the base, and from 8 to 10 inches in depth; the thickness of the walls is from 3 to 4 inches. They are constructed of coarse rude sticks externally, of the thickness of a lady's ring finger, mostly fragments of dead branches that had fallen from the oaks and chestnut. Within are smaller twigs of the same covered by a few dried leaves of *Quercus* and *Fagus* to relieve its hardness. All the nests that I have examined, and I have had abundant opportunities, answer to the above description, which will be found to differ materially from others. Usually but one brood is reared in a season; the writer has met with two, but this is of rare occurrence.

Nests have been taken close by the dwellings of man, showing the friendly disposition of the authors. Usually the species is very shy and builds in places seldom visited. When with young the birds are very pugnacious, permitting no intrusion within their jurisdiction. They manifest the most tender regard for their progeny, and exercise the most jealous care over them. Notwithstanding the mischief they commit to the farmers' crops, and their frequent raids to the poultry yards, the good which they accomplish in the destruction of noxious insects and small animals should commend them to public favor. Besides subsisting upon insects, small animals, carrion, grass, and fruits, I have in two instances observed individuals, which I took to be males, imitating the habit of their nearest kin, the fish crow, by plying the trade of fishers. There is no doubt that in the case of *Corvus ossifragus*, this habit was similarly acquired by a few birds of more sagacity than others. The period of incubation I have not satisfactorily determined, but am confident that it cannot exceed eighteen days.

Corvus ossifragus.

This species, though assigned to the South Atlantic and Gulf States by Dr. Coues in his Key to North American Birds, has been observed by the writer during the past four years to breed within the rural districts of Philadelphia. Although designated by the same great authority as a maritime species, yet it should be considered only partially so. It has been observed in company with its near relative the common crow, and commences building at the same period. Its nest, unlike that of the crow, is constructed upon a willow, by the side of a watercourse, where it can ply its piscine trade without being molested. Externally, it consists of a few rude sticks as a sort of foundation, upon which a neat and comfortable superstructure, composed of the inner fibrous parts of the red cedar, is placed, loosely arranged, the whole presenting a neater and more fastidious appearance than that of the common crow. The eggs are four in number. The ground-color is a light blue marked with a few dots and blotches of umber-brown on the small end, which are more or less confluent on the large one, obscuring to a considerable extent the background. In size they are but little superior to the eggs of the purple grakle, being about 1.40 in. in length, and .89 in width. In configuration they bear a very close resemblance to those of the great crested Fly Catcher, being almost perfectly oval. There is a marked contrast between the eggs of *ossifragus* and *Americanus* in size, shape, and markings, sufficiently striking to convince one of the distinctness of the two species, even though other details should be wanting. I have never met with more than one brood in a season. It is like its cousin in some points of character, but minus its thievish propensities. A fisher by trade, it holds all other occupations at a discount. It is fond of its young, but has not the courage to defend them against the attacks of enemies, as the former. Since it breeds usually in out-of-the-way situations, it can give farmers and others but little annoyance. Its period of incubation is similar to that of *Americanus.*

Family TYRANNIDÆ.

Tyrannus Carolinensis, Baird.

The Bee Martin, shortly after its arrival in the latter part of April, commences building. Its nest is ordinarily constructed upon the forked branches of a pear tree in an orchard, or in close proximity thereto. Why the pear tree should be selected in preference to any other, the apple and cherry for examples, it is difficult to imagine, unless the density of its foliage, and the short spine-like twigs with which the branches are armed, afford greater protection; the former from the keen gaze of rapacious birds, and the latter from mischief-seeking and mischief-loving boys. It is usually built near the top of the tree where the denser foliage is found. Occasionally, I have taken nests of this species in places remote from orchards, on the confines of thick forests, a fact which seems to intimate that the habit of building in orchards is an acquired one, brought about in obedience to a change of character in the species. As it has a passion for the little *Apis mellifica* whose hives are found in such situations, there is no doubt that a desire to be near such articles of luxury may have prompted a change, thereby saving unnecessary waste of time in procurement, and giving a better guarantee of success. It is true that the species is proverbial for its pugnacity and pertinacity, not even fearing to attack birds of prey which come within the precincts of the ground over which it exercises sway, and, therefore, the securities which a pear tree throws around are not absolutely necessary. But birds of the least sagacity would not be slow to perceive the advantage which would be gained by the selection of such a site, in the saving of great physical labor. In the vicinity of forests these protective objects are in a measure denied, the birds in consequence making up in bravery. Perhaps a vivid sense of greater danger to their young induces them to give them the advantage of everything protective that wisdom and ingenuity can devise. There is one feature about the nests which have been found in regions unoccupied by man that has not been observed in those adjoining his residence: the entire absence of feathers and hairs in the interior; these articles being substituted by fine grasses and leaves. The period of incubation ranges from 13 to 14 days according to circumstances.

Myiarchus crinitis, Cab.

This species is very abundant in this latitude, arriving from the South during the early part of May, and shortly afterwards pairing. Both birds engage in nest building. The nest is constructed in a hollow tree, mostly a pear or an apple; no doubt the previous labor of some hard-working wood-pecker, possibly *Colaptes auratus*. Mr. Samuels says, "the nests are composed of straws, leaves, feathers, and the cast-off skins of snakes." He further affirms, "it seems a distinguishing characteristic of the nests of this species, to have the skins of one or more snakes woven into the other materials." This has also been the experience of others. Mine has been quite different. I have yearly collected many nests of this species, and find a great difference in the materials. The following is the aggregate description: Loose in arrangement, with scarcely the slightest evidence of design. To an observer, it seems as if the materials had been dropped into the cavity by the birds, and, when a sufficient quantity had been accumulated, the whole had been shaken together until the ingredients had been thoroughly commingled. Dried grasses, liber of trees, rotten wood, and feathers are the chief constituents; the slough of snakes being an unnoticeable feature. In lieu thereof, I have always found the feathers of the common barnyard fowl to be a characteristic feature thereof.

That this species does not always build in cavities is certain. Two years ago, near Germantown, I found a nest built between the forked branches of an apple tree. It was composed principally of the feathers of chickens, held in place by a woof of long grasses. Though not very compact, yet it was sufficiently so to last during the season. It is doubtful, however, whether it could withstand the peltings of winter. The habit of building within the hollows of trees is doubtless an acquired one, rendered necessary by external circumstances. That species do occasionally vary in the selection of a site for a nest, is instanced by *Turdus migratorius*, Lin., which, as is well known, ordinarily builds its mud-plastered nest within the forked branches of a tree. In the case to which the writer refers, the nest was found upon the horizontal beam of an outhouse, to which the rafters are attached, after the manner of *Sayornis fuscus*, Baird. The case of *M. crinitus* cited above seems to the writer to be a case of reversion of habits.

Why this species alone of all others of the family to which it belongs should seek shelter and protection for its young in the hollows of trees, is hard to divine. We should expect to see in its structure a family resemblance. It is true that it is of a quarrelsome disposition, and as a necessary consequence, gains many enemies. To insure protection for its young against the latter's attacks, it has hit upon the happy expedient of hiding them away in the places designated.

The feathers selected for the nest are mostly white, or of a grayish color, which, with the characteristic hue of the inner bark of trees and the rotten wood that form the bulk of the nest, resemble so closely the ground color of the egg and its markings, that great advantage is gained thereby. The food of this species is mostly bees, beetles, grasshoppers, and lepidoptera. Perched upon a dead branch of a tree, the writer has observed the male bird, for hours, bobbing the head this way and that, then up and down, always on the alert for the beings which form its appropriate diet. During the period when the species is with young, may be noticed similar practices, which, however, are not so prolonged, for the male bird after brief periods of time repairs to the nest with its spoils, which are dealt out to the female and the young according to the character of the food. The period of incubation ranges from 13 to 14 days.

ORDER PICARIÆ.

Family CAPRIMULGIDÆ.

Subfamily CAPRIMULGINÆ.

Antrostomus vociferus, Bonap.

This common and little known species arrives during the early part of May, already paired. It is of a shy and retired disposition, secluding itself during the daytime in close forests, among the leaves or underbrush, only venturing forth during the shadowy twilight in quest of its food, which consists of crepuscular and nocturnal lepidoptera and various species of Phyllophagous beetles. Such a partiality has it for the covert of woods that the writer has never startled it in the open fields. The dull and sombre shadows cast upon the ground by the fluttering leaves of the trees, with the faint streaks of light that come and go between their interstices, combined with the dark colors of the leaves that repose upon the soil, create a sort of gray light, which beautifully harmonizes with the natural tints of the bird. In my travels I have often observed a whip-poor-will to start up within fifteen paces of me, and after flying a short distance on swift and noiseless pinions, to alight upon the ground. After indicating the spot by a certain bush or fallen limb, I have stealthily approached, straining my vision to its utmost capacity to gain a glimpse of the squatting bird, but before I could gratify my desire, she was up and off again. Time after time has been so spent, but seldom has it been my fortune to witness the consummation of this desire. It has never been my lot to see the male and female together during the period of incubation. The merest apology of a nest is all that is constructed. By the side of a fallen and decayed log, usually on the side where the deepest shadow is found, the female has been observed to deposit her eggs. A slight concavity is scooped out by her, and frequently lined with decayed wood, reduced to a powdered condition, the site being selected where a ready supply of the material is at hand. There is never more than one brood in a season. The period of incubation ranges from fourteen to fifteen days. I have often been surprised while travelling to notice how conscious it is of approaching steps even when the greatest caution is observed to avoid giving alarm. Its visual organs being ill-adapted to the light of day, and even the mellowed light of the woods being too powerful a stimulus, it is certain that it must depend upon other means for the detection of danger. The organ of hearing, which is well developed, is assuredly called into requisition. This species makes its appearance rather late in the season, when the sun has obtained considerable power, and retires early, frequently as early as the 25th of September.

Family TROCHILIDÆ.

Subfamily TROCHILINÆ.

Trochilus colubris, Linn.

This beautiful little species, which is the only one of its family limited to this section of country (E. Penn.), makes its appearance during the early part of May, about the time the horse chestnut (*Æsculus hippocastanum*) spreads its rich clusters of fragrant blossoms to the vernal breezes. The small insects which frequent the blossoms for their honey, together with the honey itself, afford it a rich repast. It commences building during the early part of June, both birds working assiduously until the nest is completed. In the spring of 1872, Master Charles Silverthorn, one of the writer's pupils, secured for the latter's collection at least fifteen nests, from a district scarcely one-fourth of a mile in diameter, thus showing the abundance of the species in this latitude. Some of these nests were saddled upon the moss-covered branches of an apple or pear tree, while the major part of them was found upon the branches of various species of oaks, chiefly *Quercus rubra* and *Quercus alba*. They were constructed of a woolly substance of vegetable origin, plucked from the leaves of *Verbascum thapsus*, L., of almost immaculate whiteness. It is doubtful whether the soft down which appears upon the unexpanded leaves of the poplars is utilized, since the leaves are already developed in the generality of cases when nidification commences. The exterior of the nest is compactly covered by a thatching of bluish-colored lichens, possibly a *Parmelia*, glued thereon by a viscid saliva, secreted by the birds. I have never observed, as some, the small woody fibres on the outside, which are said to strengthen the fabric. Occasionally a few cobwebs have been noticed, but the manner in which the lichens cohere seems to be all that is necessary. The nests are usually 1.50 inch in diameter, with a depth of 1.75 inch. Specimens have been taken fully 2 inches in depth. The internal cavity never exceeds $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch in depth, while instances are known of small nests with less than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. The writer has taken nests during the latter part of July, with eggs, but whether a second set or not he is unable to say, possibly the work of pairs that have been frustrated in their labors during the early part of the season. During the hatching period the male is in close proximity to the nest, and if any attempt is made to interfere therewith, is foremost and loudest in his cries of resentment, and even flies into the intruder's face with half opened jaws, requiring considerable effort to beat him off. His mate is of a more passive nature. The period of incubation, according to the writer's estimate, is about eight days. So susceptible to cold is the species that I have known it to leave for the sunny south as early as the 10th of September.

Family CUCULIDÆ.

Subfamily Coccyzinæ.

Coccyzus Americanus.

This species, a very common resident during the warm season, arrives from the south during the latter part of April, and retires to its genial warmth early in the fall, frequently as early as the first of October. In this neighborhood the nest is usually constructed between the forked branches of *Maclura aurantiaca*, at an elevation of about ten feet from the ground. It is composed externally of small sticks and rude grasses, and lined internally with fine grasses. The male bird scarcely forsakes his mate during incubation, save to provide himself and her with food. When not thus engaged, he perches upon a limb of the same tree, within a short distance of the nest, ever watchful of her, and apparently ready to administer to her slightest calls. Feelings of the tenderest sympathy and the most devoted affection are mutually exhibited. It is not shy and timid in disposition, but shows confidence in man by building close to his domains. In the spring of 1872, from my school window I could command a view of a nest of this species, and observe the minutest details of its everyday life. My pupils frequently in their plays would pass underneath the tree, while the birds were engaged in building, but so intent were they upon their work that they heeded not their presence. The nest was completed, eggs were deposited and hatched, and the young matured; the parent birds evidently feeling as secure as in more sequestered situations. Such friendship as is here displayed should strike a sympathetic cord in the bosom of relentless man, and induce him to throw around such unsuspecting creatures the ægis of his protection. The period of incubation is fourteen days. When the female is with young, the duty of feeding devolves upon the male, who, with the instincts of a faithful husband and father, administers with alacrity to their physical wants.

Family PICIDÆ.

Melanerpes erythrocephalus, Sw.

This beautiful species is of rare occurrence in the vicinity of Philadelphia during the breeding season. It is more abundant, however, farther west. In the counties of Union and Northumberland, of the State of Pennsylvania, the writer has observed it in great numbers. There it is the principal species, as *Colaptes auratus*, Swainson, is in the east. It arrives seldom earlier than the first week in May, and soon begins to excavate a cavity in a tree for its nest. The place selected is ordinarily an apple tree close by the habitation of man, but occasionally a more secluded and retired spot. The writer has often observed the nests in the hollows of partially decayed willows upon the margins of ponds. The cavity ranges from ten to twelve inches in depth, being somewhat wider at the bottom than at the entrance; the latter being just wide enough to admit the body of the bird. Dr. Thompson, in his work entitled "Birds of Vermont," affirms that "the larger end of the egg is marked with reddish spots." This variety I have never observed. It may be an exceptional occurrence in more northern latitudes. From Samuels' description of the site selected for nidification, it would seem that this species is of a timid nature. Familiarity with its habits has convinced me that it is remarkably unsuspicious, and courts rather than shuns the society of man. In the month of August, not later than the 10th, in the central part of this State, the writer has seen immense flocks of this bird, numbering hundreds, within an apple orchard, tapping the rough and fissured bark of the trees in quest of the insects that lurk therein. So tame and confiding were they, that it was possible to approach within a few paces of them without exciting suspicion or creating alarm. In the vicinity of the White Deer Mountains, in the county of Union, they abound in immense numbers during the breeding season, and are the objects of protection by the farmers, for the good which they accomplish in the destruction of myriads of insects. The period of incubation ranges from fourteen to fifteen days. The usual complement of eggs is two, occasionally three have been found.